Strengthening Disaster Recovery for the Nation
VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (VTC)
Region VIII

Time: October 22, 2009, Thursday, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM (Eastern)

Participating Locations: FEMA Region VIII, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Participation Via: VTCs, phone bridge (only) and participating through WebEx

Sectors Represented: Federal and State agencies, nonprofits and private sector and Tribal representation

Note: This product is provided as a general summary only, not a transcript of the discussion.

Region VIII participants addressed questions 1 and 4 as a group. Question 16 responses were directed to the Web site. The remaining questions were handled in Breakout Groups ensuring smaller group discussion and encouraging 100 percent participation in the process. Each VTC location was a Breakout Group. Region VIII comments follow.

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

NOTE: Responses are by questions posed and are noted using the original sequencing.

Q1:   (Group Question) How would you define a successful disaster recovery?

- Participants commented on recovery in terms of: **Processes, expectations and outcomes, resources** and **sectors**. It was noted that success needs to be defined and the question was posed: *By whom? Federal authorities? State? Local communities?*

- Comments focused on *operational* success and successful *outcomes. Challenges* were also identified.

OPERATIONAL SUCCESS
- Some participants focused on operational success when considering successful recoveries. From the operational perspective, successful recoveries:
  - Provide **rapid** recovery assistance, getting disaster victims the help they need quickly.
  - Touch all **target populations** to identify and address recovery needs, especially those unique to a specific-target audience (e.g. elderly).
  - Participants noted the role of **communications** in a successful recovery and in creating and maintaining an informed population. The continuous flow of accurate and factual information to all partners and stakeholders was identified as important to achieving a successful recovery. Appropriate media messaging was expressed as important for establishing appropriate expectations and an appropriate focus on activities, priorities and progress.
  - Participants noted that successful **partnerships** between recovery resource providers helped ensure successful recoveries. The importance of **teamwork** within and between partners was expressed. Tools to help define and strengthen partnerships and teams include creating **pre-disaster Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs)** to establish partnerships early, define appropriate expectations and provide operational guidance.
  - Region VIII participants also noted the value of **recovery education programs** in creating and maintaining an informed population. Participants felt it is important that citizens and local authorities are informed of available resources for recovery and how those resources can be accessed. Outreach through education is important during a disaster recovery but is also desirable **pre-disaster.**
  - Participants expressed what became a recurring theme: The importance of having all players **"at the table."** It is important that a clear understanding exists of who is on the

"Team" and who is leading. This group felt that **local and State authorities must take the lead** but it is important that roles — Federal, State, Tribal, local, nonprofit, private sector and volunteer — are clearly identified and understood.

o   Region VIII participants felt that **recovery management coordination** is important to successful recoveries. Recovery management needs to **track** all recovery issues and **coordinate** recovery activities, partners and resources. It was also noted that for management coordination to be effective, **leadership must be knowledgeable** about the community, disaster impacts, needs essential to community and individual recovery and available resources and partners to meet those needs.

RECOVERY OUTCOMES

- When considering recovery outcomes and what success might look like, participant responses addressed **capabilities** and **resources, expectations, attitudes** and the **economy**. Responses pointed to specific examples including:
  o   **Infrastructure** needs addressed and back in place.
  o   **Medical services** back on line.
  o   One participant noted that defining a successful recovery should include **social networks** re-established and **environmental** issues appropriately addressed.
  o   **Economy** would be back in place. Another expanded on that comment saying that it should achieve pre-disaster, or better, levels within five (5) years of the disaster.
  o   **Local capacity to manage recovery** would be back in place at appropriate levels needed to ensure success. Participants noted that once capacity is back in place, the need for outside help is minimized.

- One participant noted that successful recoveries must include an attitude benchmark: Victims of a disaster no longer thinking of themselves as victims but instead as **"survivors."**

- Another noted that success could be defined, in part, as **"bringing people back where they were"** pre-disaster. Another said it is important that a definition for successful recovery include the community being **"better than before" –** a "new" normal**.**

RECOVERY EXPECTATIONS

- Community, stakeholder and individual expectations were discussed. Participants noted that expectations must be realistic, that things were not likely to return to the **"way they were."** Instead communities would have a "new" normal. While returning individuals and communities to **as close to "normal"** as possible is desirable, it is also unlikely that goal will be achieved at "100 percent."

RESOURCES

- When considering resources, participants felt that **adequate funding** and **"professional" (technical assistance)** must be in place and accessible if successful recoveries are to be achieved.

- The role of insurance in recovery was discussed:
  o   One participant noted the important role **personal insurance** plays in recovery but also noted that it is often inadequate.
  o   Another said that it is important:
     o   State and local governments get the message out to citizens to get **Flood Plain Insurance.** (Written response provided immediately after the VTC concluded.)

- o State and local governments have "workshops" with their flood plain manager on those areas considered within the Flood Plain. (Written response provided immediately after the VTC concluded.)
- o **Get other-than-FEMA recovery programs** on board early, naming Small Business Administration (SBA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Transportation (DOT), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and others as examples. (Written response provided immediately after VTC concluded.)
- o Nonprofits and the private sector are recognized as important assets in **bridging gaps:** (Written response provided immediately after VTC concluded.)
  - o When the availability of **public funds falls short**.
  - o When **legal issues** become barriers.
  - o In addressing **liability issues** and credentialing.
  - o Addressing **standardized training** needs.

- While more preparedness- and response-focused than recovery, the participant noted the:
  - o Importance of the availability of **shelters.** It was recommended that sheltering resources be based on the history of shelter needs within the community and should include shelters for pets as well as people. (Written response provided immediately after VTC concluded.)
  - o Critical infrastructure has Continuity of Operations Programs (**COOPs)** and **assets** necessary to mitigate loss of power and other utilities to ensure continuous operations. (Written response provided immediately after VTC concluded.)

BARRIERS
- When considering barriers to success, it was again noted that the **availability of recovery funding** is essential to meeting recovery needs.

Q2: (Breakout Question) Are there clear phases in the disaster recovery process that are useful milestones?

- Breakout participants who responded to this question noted four (4) *organizational* phases of recovery:
  - o **Phase I: Identifying** and **understanding** the crisis/disaster. Immediate actions to protect health, safety of people and property and to secure the area/community would occur during this phase.
  - o **Phase II: Stabilization** and **restoration** of basic services. This phase might rely heavily on the use of volunteers.
  - o **Phase III:** Providing **family** and **individual assistance** to get families and individuals "back on their feet."
  - o **Phase IV:** Providing **business assistance** to restart the local economy.

Q3: (Breakout Question) What features of Federal disaster recovery assistance are most important to you?

- This question was discussed in a Breakout Group. Initial responses included comments on: **Communications, training, speed** and **timeliness of response, recovery capacity** and **mitigation**.

- With regard to **communications,** participants noted that the ability to communicate effectively is essential to a successful recovery. Help is often needed in developing accurate and consistent messages. It was noted that delivering "continuity of government" messaging and messages that say, *"Help is on the way"* is reassuring to victims.
- Participants also thought that **training** is essential in building recovery capacity and that training should occur **pre-disaster.** Training content should include increasing awareness of resources available for recovery, as well as an understanding of how to access those resources. Experience was mentioned as important in training and building capacity.
- Participants noted that the Federal government *response* to disasters is "speedy." In addition to speed, participants note that recovery efforts and assistance need to be **focused** and **timely.** It was also noted that local and State governments have difficulty meeting the same staffing levels Federal resources are able to bring to the "table." State and local workers are "borrowed" from their "day jobs" during a disaster and stretched pretty thin. One participant described it as a "supply and demand" issue.
- Participants again noted that **mitigation efforts** were important to include in the recovery conversation. Participants noted that mitigation efforts helped communities better withstand the possibility of future disasters and also noted that successful mitigation initiatives reduce the need for Federal reimbursement when facing future disasters.

Q4:   (Group Question) How would you measure progress and what specific metrics should be considered for a successful disaster recovery?

- This discussion began with some general comments regarding successful recovery — what it might be and how it might be achieved — and general comments were continuously inserted in the conversation.

- Participants noted that recovery is a **LONG** (emphasis intended) **process** and that recovery progress is **complicated.** Participants noted that it is important to be **respectful of the community** and the community's process for its recovery and that the **private sector** is an essential partner in successful recoveries. One participant expressed that the private sector should be brought into the Joint Field Office (JFO) and **early on.**

- Recovery requires **multi-jurisdictional coordination**. **Local communities must define their success** and **local authorities must lead** the recovery effort. **Mitigation** initiatives were again mentioned as important to successful recoveries. It was noted again that while it may be desirable to "restore" the community to its "previous condition," achieving "100 percent" of that goal may not be likely.

- Participants noted that to measure success needs must be identified and **local capacity** to meet needs must be assessed. Participants felt this is particularly critical for smaller communities because larger communities are likely to have more capacity to identify and meet needs than smaller communities.

- Participants think **community plans** — comprehensive and regional plans **—** might be useful tools in measuring recovery success. Important questions to consider include: *How inclusive is the plan? Are all stakeholders participants in the plan?*

- Participants noted that cost is NOT the driving measure for success.

- **Rebuilding** was discussed as a success measurement theme: Progress in rebuilding facilities, infrastructure and the community, rebuilding individual lives, rebuilding community and individual mental health. The question was posed: *Have mental health issues been addressed?*

- **Housing** was also a successful recovery theme. Success can be measured in part by the number of people in safe housing. Participants noted that restoring permanent housing is the hardest to achieve.

- One participant noted that community recovery leaders are likely to experience **recovery "fatigue."** Managing dual responsibilities for rebuilding their personal lives while guiding the rebuilding of the community adds to an already stressful situation. The need for mental health support was again noted.

METRICS
- When considering specific metrics, participants noted similar themes voiced in the general discussion regarding measuring success: **Delivery of assistance**, **restoring economic conditions** and **housing** were important measurements of success as well as community return to **viability.** Participants said that a **framework** for recovery needs to be in place **prior to a disaster** and success can be measured within that framework. Pre-disaster planning can provide the framework. One participant expressed that it is important that monitoring for success occur in **real time.**

MEASURING PERCEPTION OF SUCCESS
- Monitoring the **number of calls** received by Congressional offices. As recovery proceeds, participants in this Breakout Group believed that calls to elected leadership would decrease. The further along the recovery, the more successful the recovery, the fewer the calls to elected leaders.
- Monitoring **expectations** was noted as a possible measurement tool: Recovery efforts are often criticized as being too slow or efforts not being sufficient. Success can be measured by the reduction of criticism. The role communications plays was also noted: Perceived success can be achieved in part through successful recovery messaging.

COMMUNITY-BASED MEASUREMENTS
- Some participants thought metrics should reflect **community health**. Specific mentions were made of:
  - Identifying **infrastructure** damage and tracking and measuring progress of repairs and restoration of services: water, power, etc. It was noted that infrastructure restoration occurs after life safety needs are met.
  - Measuring **economic progress** by monitoring the restoration of the tax base, rate of industry return, number of jobs back in place and businesses back online (meaning "up and running").
  - Measuring **outward migration** and the **return of residents**. It was noted this is a longer-term measurement.
  - Measuring the number of **people back** in their homes.
  - Measuring the restoration of **health services**.
  - Participants noted that Long-Term Recovery (**LTR) committee needs assessments** and the rate at which those needs are being meet could be useful tool in measuring recovery success.

TRACKING TOOLS
- Several tracking tools were mentioned as possible measurements:
  - Tracking the **delivery of specific assistance**.
  - Identifying and tracking **recovery needs** and measuring progress on three (3) fronts:
    - Awareness of recovery needs by **citizens**;
    - Awareness of needs by those with **recovery resources**; and
    - **Monitoring progress** on meeting needs (matching resources to needs).

    It was noted that identifying, tracking and meeting needs requires a **continuous flow of information** and commitment to continuous information gathering and distribution.

  - Tracking **unmet needs** and measuring progress in addressing those (identifying and finding resources to meet those needs).
  - Tracking the number of Preliminary Damage Assessments (**PDAs)/Project Worksheets** completed. Public Assistance (PA) goals reached.
  - Tracking the number of **occupancy permits** issued.

Q5: (Breakout Question) What are best practices in managing recovery from disasters?

- **Communications, coordination** and **recovery approach** are themes participant responses reflect when considering this question.

- With regard to **communications,** participants feel:
  - **External communications planning** needs to be improved and should include appropriate and proactive use of the media.
  - It is important that citizens and stakeholders up and down the recovery continuum and at all levels of authority be **well informed** throughout the recovery.
  - Web Emergency Operations Center (**EOC)** is a useful tool to facilitate information sharing and coordination.
  - A **broader audience** for recovery messaging is needed: Local and State messaging is critical to recovery success but sensitivity to national perceptions is also important.
  - Waiting on traditional media may not be the fastest way to receive or distribute information — traditional media may be late. Participants believe it is important to **explore all media forms** including social media (e.g. Twitter, FaceBook, text messaging, America Online Instant Messenger (AIM), etc.) and rely on Web sites along with traditional media forms like TV and radio.

- With regard to **coordination participants** feel:
  - **Transparency** is essential in recovery coordination and management. An open door policy improved relationships, communications and coordination — especially cross-program communications and coordination.
  - Coordination efforts must include **all levels of authority**: Federal, State, Tribal, county and local.
  - Participants noted the importance of **relationship building** before a disaster and that pre-established pre-disaster relationships facilitate disaster recovery coordination post-disaster.
  - Participants also noted that **institutional knowledge** is critical to effective recovery coordination.

- With regard to **approach**, participants expressed a need for **proactive outreach** across program areas and jurisdictional authorities with built in accountabilities. Leadership must outreach. Other important approach strategies include the need for:
  - Aggressive **pre-disaster recovery planning**
  - Mechanisms for **plan updating**.
  - Ongoing **awareness** of recovery planning efforts by those who need to know.

- A final comment noted the importance, management and effective use of **donations** (national, regional, State and local) in successful recoveries.

Q6:   (Breakout Question) What are the appropriate State, local and Tribal roles in leading disaster recovery efforts?

- Participants in this Breakout Group noted that **rapid communications** between and among State, local and Tribal leadership is critical to successful recoveries so that **available assistance** for individuals and victims is identified and delivered timely. Town Hall meetings were mentioned as important communications tools.

- Part of the communications challenge is **local and Tribal leadership** understanding that they must *request* help first to the State and then Federal family of agencies.

- **Special-needs** populations were a part of this group's discussion. Participants expressed that special-needs populations must be integrated into the recovery process, **and** in recovery planning and plan updating.

Q7:   (Breakout Question) How can the nonprofit and private sectors be better integrated into recovery?

- The Breakout Group said **coordination** with nonprofit and private sector partners is important to integrating those assets and resources into the recovery process.

- One participant suggested that this question might need to be **reframed**: *How can government be better integrated with nonprofits and the private sector? How can government authorities be better partners?* The idea is: Communities will re-form. *How can government help?*

- Participants suggested **focus group** at all levels with all stakeholders and **training** opportunities for nonprofit and private sector representatives likely to be involved in recovery could be significant steps in integration.

- Representatives from the nonprofit community noted that their **challenge is often cost**. There is an assumption that nonprofits will be there no matter what. As an example, they noted that to be effective, nonprofits and the private sector need training; training costs are often prohibitive.

- Participants noted the **FEMA/Corps of Engineers Silver Jackets** as a partnership example that can positively impact recovery efforts. This comprehensive partnership promotes conservation,

encourages conversation and information sharing across political boundaries (county and State lines) and across the spectrum of threats and hazards.

- During this discussion, it was noted effective and efficient recovery decision-making requires planning and **field authorities** to apply Federal resources.

ROLE OF PLANNING
- **Pre-disaster mitigation planning** that develops **planning partnerships** with **nonprofits** and the **private sector** can be beneficial to recovery efforts. Plans should:
  - o Identify and examine community **vulnerabilities**.
  - o Develop **strategies** to address vulnerabilities.
  - o **Linkage** to other planning efforts such as Hazard Mitigation Plans, Emergency Management Plans, Long-Term Recovery Plans and others.

- Plans **need to be evaluated as to whether they are:**
  - o **User friendly.**
  - o **Understood.**
  - o **Shared.**
  - o **Exercised.**
  - o **Reviewed.**
  - o **Updated.**

- Specific suggestions were made regarding **faith-based communities, outreach, integration** and **volunteer "surge"** issues:

FAITH-BASED
- o Participants felt that the faith-based community needs to be **at the table**, pre-disaster, during disaster planning and during a disaster.
- o Faith-based communities offer **local and on-site integration**. They are on-the-ground and already a known participant in the community. They know "who to call, the type of assistance needed."

VOLUNTEERS
- o Recovery initiatives often raise the question of how to receive and distribute **manpower and financial donations**. Volunteer organizations can bridge that gap.
- o Volunteer organizations also can be a **center for galvanizing action**, providing manpower and outreach to citizens.
- o One participant noted that volunteer organizations can help **manage** the volunteer "surge" often seen post-disaster.

OUTREACH TO THE NONPROFIT + PRIVATE SECTORS
- Participants expressed that effective outreach is determined in part on **clearly defining assumptions**. Participants noted that existing faith-based, volunteer, nonprofit AND for-profit organizations can **build bridges** between recovery resources and community needs and among and between recovery partners.

INTEGRATION
- Participants expressed that integration is dependent upon **communications** between recovery authorities to the nonprofit and not-for-profit communities. Ideas to enhance communications include:
  - o Development of **Web sites** that can inventory recovery assets.

- o Determination of the appropriate place for nonprofits and the private sector in the **recovery planning** effort and to institutionalize those roles.
- o Realizing integration efforts need to occur at **multiple levels**.
- o Including nonprofits and the private sector **"at the table"** with government authorities on regular basis pre-disaster.
- o A continuous focus on **relationship** building. Opportunities to enhance relationship building were noted. They include nonprofit and private participation in:
    - o Local and emergency **planning committees.**
    - o **Tribal response committees**.
    - o **Public input** opportunities.
    - o **Stakeholder** meetings.

- One participant provided a written response after the VTC noting, *"It is hard to impossible to effect a rapid and organized recovery if all the players are not using the same plans. Government agencies have been pushing to complete Continuity of Operation Program (COOP)/Council of Government (COG) plans and now it is time to reach out to private sector's large stakeholders and faith-based organizations to develop strategies for resource sharing. COOP plans (have been done) for the 21 northern counties and in three specific cities. In each case there were opportunities for the county or city to ask to use private resources to supplement the list of possible alternate locations.*

  "Local governments need to reach out to larger business and push for planning to look at what resources (i.e. information technology, work spaces) could be shared and what the local governments are going to do to avoid competing for limited resources that may be needed by the area residences."

Q8:   (Breakout Question) What are best practices for community recovery planning that incorporates public input?

- Participants identified **ongoing** community-based training and exercising are tools that promote community recovery planning best practices and for incorporating public input into the process**.**

- **Public Information Officer (PIO) networks** can be useful in helping to keep publics and stakeholders informed. PIO networks should include media partnerships. They should also provide information to State agencies. Training and exercising PIO networks should include a **public component outreach component**.

- Participants noted that Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plans have a **strong public input** component and that recovery needs more planning initiatives.

- **Communications, planning initiatives** and **relationship building** were repeated themes as participants responded to this question. Ideas to enhance communications channels included:
  - o Development of **Web sites** for public access to recovery information.
  - o Public input **"at the table"** with government authorities was noted as important especially during planning efforts.
  - o A continuous focus on **pre-disaster community relationship** building. Opportunities to enhance relationship building were noted (and mirrored relationship-building opportunities identified when addressing other questions). They include participation in:

- o Local and emergency **planning committees**.
- o **Tribal response committees**.
- o **Public input** opportunities.
- o **Stakeholder** meetings.
- o Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) **trainings and exercises**.

Q9: (Breakout Question) How can Federal, State and local disaster planning and recovery processes and programs be best coordinated?

- The Breakout Group that addressed this question noted that coordination efforts can benefit from:
  - o Immediate **face-to-face meetings** post-disaster to identify recovery resources.
  - o Including **local recovery partners early** in recovery planning process and in recovery meetings.
  - o Face-to-face interactions. Face-to-face meetings can facilitate **strong pre- and post-disaster** relationships.
  - o A focus on **accountability**. Participants felt that having all stakeholders at the JFO can improve connectivity and accountability. The example noted was USDA or Housing and Urban Development (HUD) representation at the JFO.
  - o **LTR Task Forces** including Federal partners when organizing and when planning.

- Participants also noted that **all partners** need to know **all programs**. It was again noted that the process must be led at the local level.

- One participant also noted that understanding local legal concerns is helpful and that workshops and training are needed on the recovery process, Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA). (Written response provided immediately after VTC concluded.)

Q10: (Breakout Question) As disaster recovery is primarily a State and local leadership issue, what are best practices for the timing (including start and end) and form of Federal assistance and coordination?

- Participants in the Breakout Group discussed **timing, transition issues** and the **form and coordination** of Federal assistance. They also noted that **media understanding** of start/stop timeframes and transitions are important to public perceptions of successful recoveries. Participants noted that **including IA, PA and a planning person** in EOC operations can benefit recovery by liaising and relaying information to regional authorities and other Federal agencies.

- With regard to when **operations should end**, participants noted that perhaps that should be when the JFO closes and/or Federal recovery programs are complete.

- Participants noted that whenever start and end dates occur, **transition coordination** is important to success. One participant noted that transition occurs from response to recovery as well as when recovery support is complete.

- Participants also noted that the **IA Declaration** needs to be timelier.

Q11: (Breakout Question) What are the greatest capacity challenges that local and State governments face in disaster recovery and what are the best practices for increasing that capacity?

- Breakout participants noted:

CAPACITY CHALLENGES TO SUCCESSFUL RECOVERIES
  - **Rural communities** are more likely to face capacity challenges than urban areas.
  - **Political influence** in the allocation of limited resources puts recovery efforts at risk. Recovery resources are limited. Assessments are completed to determine where resources are best used. When resources are allocated for reasons other than those identified in objective assessments, recovery success may be compromised.
  - **Community "readiness"** to apply for and receive assistance. It was noted that this may be more of a challenge for rural communities. Participants expressed that operationally understanding eligibility and match requirements, matching recovery programs to community needs and identifying and addressing gaps in resources are important to recovery but require local staff to accomplish. **Streamlining applications processes** and more **clearly defining eligibility requirements** were mentioned as possible solutions.
  - Communities may not have **staffing capacity** to sustain LTR efforts. Participants noted that the Federal government can rally significant resources — manpower as well as financial and State and local governments may have difficulty matching that level of commitment.
  - **Limited IA resources**; limited IA resources force a reliance on nonprofit resources.
  - **Communications and coordination** are ongoing challenges.

- Participants noted that establishing **recovery organizations** at the State level to facilitate the coordination of recovery efforts as a best practice.

Q 12: (Breakout Question) What are best practices for marshaling Federal assistance both financial and professional support – to support State and local efforts to recover from a disaster, and how can we work together to better leverage existing Federal grant dollars?

- Participants noted that Federal assistance comes in the form of **financial support, technical assistance** from recovery professionals and guidance in **leveraging** grant dollars. (Region VIII participants noted that they had a "fabulous" relationship with Region VIII staff and placed high value on Region VIII staff resources.)

- Participants discussed several best practices. They included:
  - Participants cited local communities hiring a **Recovery Manager** (RM) as a best practice in coordinating and managing recovery.
    - Criteria should include being **knowledgeable a**bout the communi**ty and credibility** within the community and among recovery stakeholders.
    - Participants felt that the **expense of hiring a RM** will be out weighed by savings and access to recovery resources that might otherwise go unnoticed.
  - Revisiting and understanding the *Stafford Act* and *Stafford Act* programs is essential to successful recoveries.

o *Stafford Act* changes need to **"un-silo"** recovery monies.

o Local and State officials **knowing available recovery resources** helps ensure a successful recovery. One participant noted that an inventory of available resources, regularly updated, would be very beneficial.

o **Early establishment of Emergency Support Function (ESF) #14 Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) Teams**, an assurance that ESF #14 will be stood up and early integration in the JFO will benefit recovery success.

  o Empower ESF #14 LTCR Teams to **combine funds** and coordinate beyond restrictions of funding authorities.

o **Robust communications** channels and the availability of strategic communications tools are important to recovery coordination and successful recovery outcomes.

Q13: (Breakout Question) What unmet needs are common to most disasters that do not seem to be adequately addressed under the current systems and programs?

- Participants in this Breakout Group noted that unmet needs are likely to fall to State agencies and Voluntary Organizations in Active Disasters (VOADs).

- The unmet needs list cited by the Breakout Group included:
  o Assistance for **farmers/ranchers** needs more funding.
  o Resources to address community **flood control issues** are needed. Temporary dikes were noted as examples.
  o Bringing long-term housing **up to code**.
  o Addressing **insurance gaps**, including "FEMA insurance gaps" and identifying those things not covered by household or flood insurance. Examples of coverage gaps included: Basements (IA does not include) and understanding the difference between ground saturation and flooding and knowing what is covered.
  o Gaps in **incoming** and **outgoing communications**. Tribal challenges regarding communications were specifically mentioned. The challenge of providing accurate and timely information is ongoing.
  o Assistance in managing **grant deadlines**, applications and needed extensions.
  o Participants noted **mitigation as a gap** in focus and awareness.

Q 14: (Breakout Question) What are best practices for integrating economic and environmental sustainability into recovery?

- When considering **economic sustainability**, participants observed that:
  o **Connectivity** between private sector (business) resources and assets and local government is important to successful recoveries.
  o Businesses, especially small businesses, need **access to grants** and **loans** and post-disaster training and retraining.
  o Recognition is needed that businesses also confront **health** and **safety issues** in the post-disaster recovery environment that may impact their ability to get employees back to work.
  o **"Crisis control" planning** should include business recovery planning and recovery planners and groups should be populated with business stakeholders.

- When considering **environmental sustainability**, participants noted:

- o **Business recovery advocacy groups** need an environmental component and can play a significant leadership role in that effort.

Q15:   (Breakout Question) What are best practices for integrating mitigation and resilience into recovery?

- Breakout participants commented on the need for **committed leadership** to address integrating mitigation and resilience into recovery. They noted that leadership needs to ensure that mitigation efforts are an **every day activity**, before as well as after a disaster. Leadership also needs to provide oversight so that:
  - o **Recovery projects** are reviewed and see that opportunities to embed mitigation initiatives are not overlooked.
  - o Challenge **PA Worksheet timetables** so that there is time to consider including mitigation techniques, best practices in rebuilding and new technologies.
  - o States and communities have strong **recovery plans** that:
    - o Include **mitigation** initiatives.
    - o Include **risk approaches** in preparedness response.
    - o Promote **business preparedness**.
    - o **Align** Federal program activities and features.

Q16: (Directed to the Web site) What else would you like us to know?